
For Immediate Release

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Survey: Majority of Respondents Would Feel Comfortable Sending Their Students Back to School This Fall, Public Health Concerns Remain

MDE released the results of an informal survey of Minnesota families on their experience with distance learning and the upcoming 2020-21 school year

ROSEVILLE, MN – Today, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) released the results of the Fall Planning Survey for Families. Over the past several weeks, MDE conducted an informal survey of Minnesota families on their experience with distance learning this past spring as well as their thoughts on the upcoming 2020-21 school year. Between when the survey opened on June 15, 2020 and when it closed on July 6, 2020, MDE collected more than 130,000 completed responses. The survey was offered in English, Hmong, Spanish and Somali.

“We deeply appreciate and value the overwhelming response we received from our families,” said Commissioner Mary Cathryn Ricker. **“Our educators worked tirelessly this spring to create distance learning plans in just eight days, rethinking the way they educate and connect with our students in order to keep them healthy and safe. As we plan for the upcoming school year, we will listen to the experiences of our families, teachers, and students and the advice of public health experts to determine a safe path forward.”**

The survey showed that 64% of respondents selected that they would feel comfortable sending their students back to school this fall. Of those 64% who said they'd be comfortable sending their student(s) back to school this fall, 94% would send their student(s) back to school full time. Less than 12% of respondents said they would not feel comfortable sending their student(s) back to school. However, of the respondents who answered they would not feel comfortable sending their student(s) back to school, over 83% percent cited concerns about public health a reason why they would not feel comfortable.

The survey also asked respondents about what went well during distance learning and what was challenging. The most common selections for what went well during distance learning include, "access to the internet," "access to technology," and "good communication from teacher(s)." The most common selections for what was challenging during distance learning include, "student(s) didn't feel empowered to work on their own," "student(s) experiencing new mental health challenges due to COVID-pandemic," and "hard to understand lessons."

MDE has previously stated that they will make an announcement for the 2020-21 school year no later than the week of July 27, 2020.

This survey is just one of MDE's many [public engagement efforts](#) to seek feedback from students, families, educators, and school staff on the distance learning experience this spring. Earlier this summer, MDE worked with the Wisconsin/Minnesota Comprehensive Center (WMCC) to hold over 30 group conversations to get feedback on distance learning. In addition to these feedback groups, MDE has collaborated with the WMCC to do a systems review of distance learning plans focused on structure, content and equity. [This information](#) continues to be a cornerstone of our planning for the upcoming school year.

The results of MDE's Fall Planning Survey for Families is available on MDE's webpage, which includes [summary of results for all respondents](#), [summary of results disaggregated by race/ethnicity](#), as well as the [full data file](#).